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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EFIN](#) [MEPN](#) [KPAL](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ZAHAR MAKES BRIEF
STOP IN CAIRO, MEETS ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) En route to East Asia for another regional fund-raising tour and participation in an Arab-China ministerial gathering in Beijing, Palestinian Authority (PA) Foreign Minister Mahmud al Zahar visited Cairo May 24 where he met Arab League Secretary General Amre Moussa. MFA Palestinian Affairs Director Randa Labib confirmed to poloff May 25 that Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit did not meet with Zahar during the visit. She was unable to confirm whether Zahar had any additional meetings in Cairo. Zahar, she said, was in town to press Moussa for release of Arab donations to the Palestinians that are being held by the League, pending discussions over a new international funding mechanism. (Note: Labib said the League was currently holding approximately USD 133 million dollars donated recently by Arab governments to the PA in fulfillment of earlier commitments. She said that Qatar recently paid into the Arab League's fund 40 million Euros, Saudi Arabia paid USD 15 million, Yemen paid USD 1.6 million, Oman paid USD 6.6 million, Algeria paid USD 34 million, and Syria 4.5 million Euros. End note.)

¶2. (C) Arab League Spokesman Alaa Rushy told poloff May 25 that the meeting between Zahar and Moussa had been an opportunity to review the state of play on governance issues in the occupied territories, progress on a funding mechanism for providing international aid to the Palestinians, and the prospects of progress on the peace process with Israel. Rushdy said the meeting did "not produce anything new" - Zahar pressed the Arab League to release donated funds to the PA, while Moussa pressed Zahar to accept the Beirut peace initiative as a basis for next steps in the peace process.

¶3. (U) Following their meeting, Moussa and Zahar held a joint press conference in which Zahar responded to Egyptian Interior Ministry accusations of the previous day asserting Palestinian involvement in the recent triple bombing in the Sinai resort of Dahab. Zahar denied any involvement in the Dahab bombings by Hamas or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). According to the Egyptian MOI's statement, several Egyptians involved in the attacks reportedly met with extremists in Gaza and received money and explosives training.
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